

SPECIAL HOLIDAY ISSUE

DISCOVERY

The Development of Combat Power and Efficiency

Vol. 28, No. 25 - Friday, Dec. 17, 2004 - Brooks City-Base, TX

BROOKS
CITY-BASE
A Technology and Business Center



Through the Many Facets of Aerospace Medicine



Graphic by Staff Sgt. Jack Vudtianon

Holiday message from Air Force leaders

The following is a holiday message from Secretary of the Air Force Dr. James G. Roche and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John P. Jumper:

"In this special holiday season we offer our sincere best wishes to our Air Force family — our Total Force of active duty, Guard, Reserve and civilians, as well as your families who support your remarkable commitment to protect freedom and defend the United States."

"You are the most important part of the world's greatest air and space force — the heart and soul of our combat capability, and the bedrock of what makes this nation great."

"For those deployed, please know that you and your families are in our thoughts and prayers, and that we are enormously proud of the work you're

doing. In Afghanistan and Iraq, you continue to fight terrorism while helping courageous people find the path to stability and self-governance. For those of you who serve in the United States, you defend our Republic to keep Americans safe."

"At home and abroad, you give our nation priceless gifts through your service — our cherished freedoms and the opportunity to live in peace."

"This is an extraordinary time to be an American and to serve in America's Air Force. We thank each of you and your families for your incomparable commitment. Wherever you may be this season, we encourage you to pause and reflect on your faith, your family, and your friends."

"We're honored to serve with you. We wish each of you a happy holiday season and blessings for a prosperous new year!"

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Take care of one another this holiday

By Master Sgt. Nicki Beard

11th Medical Group First Sergeant, Bolling Air Force Base

As a young airman first class in 1986, I spent my first holiday season away from friends and family. I was stationed at Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany, and was farther away from home than I had ever been.

At the time, I was fortunate enough to have a supervisor who made sure his young airmen and junior non-commissioned officers had plans for Christmas. He served us dinner in his home on Christmas Eve and even sent us home with enough leftovers to last through Christmas Day. On the day following Christmas, he stopped by the dorm to check up on us and spent a little time hanging out with us in the day room.

From time to time, I think about that experience, and I am glad my supervisor was there. Granted, this was not a Christmas like any other I had ever experienced, but this supervisor did what he could to make it feel a little more like home for all of us.

Seventeen years have passed since my first holiday season spent away from family and friends, and once again, the holiday season is fast approaching.

My day-to-day schedule is pretty full. There are parties to plan and parties to attend. I have a family of my own now who all deserve the perfect gift, and I must fight traffic and share the mall with 3 million other holiday shoppers who are also looking for that perfect gift. I will bake dozens of cookies, decorate my house for the season and send countless Christmas cards. I will do all of these things while managing the endless "to-do" list that sits on my desk. Somewhere in this schedule I will find the time to enjoy the season for what it truly is.

My guess is that most people's holiday schedule is much like mine. Yet we must each find the time to look at those around us, especially those who are young and alone for the first time, and ensure that everyone is taken care of for the holiday season.

We must be actively involved on a daily basis to be able to reach out to those around us and make a real impact. We all have peers who we work alongside every day. That day-to-day contact makes them comfortable with us. When they talk to us and share their problems and concerns with us, we need to really listen. We may not be able to solve their problems, but just taking

the time to hear them out may make all the difference in the world to them.

As supervisors and leaders, we should take the time to cultivate strong professional relationships so those we supervise will feel comfortable telling us what issues they face.

We should know each individual we supervise personally. We should know their spouses' names and how many children they have. Don't be afraid to ask those you supervise what their holiday plans will be. Ask for details such as where they are going, what they will be doing and whom they will be with. If they are leaving town, ask them when they will be returning. Not when their leave is ending, but when they will physically return.

Make contact with your people throughout the season. If they are staying in the area, give them a call, wish them happy holidays and ask how they are. Pay special attention to those young airmen in the dormitory or who may be new single parents. Every effort must be made to ensure they are not spending this time alone. Feelings of loneliness and isolation are frequently amplified this time of year. For those who are young and away from home for the first time, these feelings can be overwhelming.

If you supervise young airmen in the dormitory, make time to drop by. If you do nothing else, you can see who might be hanging out in the common area and leave them some goodies.

For those who travel out of town, give them a call when they return. Yes, some may look at it as a trust issue, but if you have built the right relationship, they will understand that you are interested and concerned that they had a safe trip as well as a fulfilling holiday season.

So, if you have been skimming through this article looking for the key points to take away with you, here they are. Seventeen years ago, I was blessed with a supervisor who was genuinely concerned with the well-being of his troops. It is true, I would have survived that holiday season even without his involvement, but the fact that he took the time to make sure we were all taken care of made a tremendous difference.

As supervisors and leaders, we must all follow his example. We may be busy and stressed, but we cannot forget that as a military community we are a family. It is our responsibility to do our part in seeing that we all celebrate this season together.

Your feedback can strengthen suicide prevention program

By Lt. Gen. Richard V. Reynolds

Vice Commander, Air Force Materiel Command

I am extremely concerned about the dramatic rise in the Air Force's suicide rates. The active duty rate averages 15 per 100,000 Airmen, the highest rate since we implemented our current suicide prevention program in 1996. Air Force Materiel Command experienced three suicides in a single week during October.

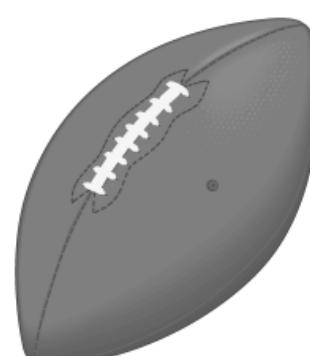
In response to this tragic situation, the Secretary of the Air Force and the Air Force Chief of Staff have directed a review of our prevention efforts. A leadership survey at <https://private.amc.af.mil/sg/sgpm/survey> targets all commanders, first sergeants and super-

visors. A second survey at <https://private.amc.af.mil/sg/sgpm/ids> is provided for all others. I urge everyone to take one of these important surveys. They each take less than five minutes to complete and will give us valuable feedback about our program's effectiveness. They must be completed by Dec. 28.

Air Mobility Command is collecting the data and will forward the results to us to distribute by the end of the year. If you have any questions about this survey, please contact the command behavioral health consultant, Lt. Col. Rob Campbell at DSN 986-3641.

Taking care of our Airmen — military and Air Force Civilian — is our top priority. Please help us by taking these surveys. Thanks for pitching in!

Editor's Challenge: Bowl game prediction contest



Think you know your sports? Test your prognostication skills against the editor of the Discovery by predicting the winners of the 27 remaining college football bowl games listed on page 20.

Submit your predictions to kendahl.johnson@brooks.af.mil. Entries must be received no later than Dec. 21. The challenge is free and is open to anyone that reads the paper. To win, you must make more correct predictions than the editor, whose picks will be posted to the Discovery website by Dec. 21. In the highly unlikely event that multiple entrants notch more correct picks than myself, the person who makes the most correct picks will be the overall winner. In the spirit of the holidays, the winner will receive a "White Elephant" prize. Good luck!



History of Brooks holiday traditions dates to 1918

By Rudy Purificato

311th Human Systems Wing

The Brooks holiday season of giving had a different flavor nearly a century ago when the base known as Brooks Field was in its infancy.

Just before Christmas 1917, ground was broken for the construction of an airfield that would become the center for primary flying instruction in the U.S. Signal Corps' fledgling Army Air Service. While construction crews did not have the time or inclination to decorate the base for Christmas 1917, the time-honored tradition among construction workers of placing a Christmas tree or two on top prominent buildings under construction did prevail here. No

known photographs exist of this symbolic practice, but it is more than likely that work crews 'spruced up' the Brooks cantonment area with perhaps more than one Scotch pine or Douglas fir.

The first real Christmas celebration here took place the following year at what then was the center of Brooks community life: the mess hall. It was there where 1st Sergeant Herbert L. Corell, in charge of the enlisted mess, cooked up some palate-pleasing holiday fare for the 'doughboys' who soaked up turkey gravy with mounds of Army-baked bread.

During that 1918 Christmas meal the troops were treated to holiday music by the Brooks Jazz Orchestra. The 12-mem-

ber ensemble, lead by Sergeant First Class Frank P. Anthony, who played the bass, really jazzed up some traditional Christmas music. Their performance set a precedent for other holiday concerts held here over the years between the world wars.

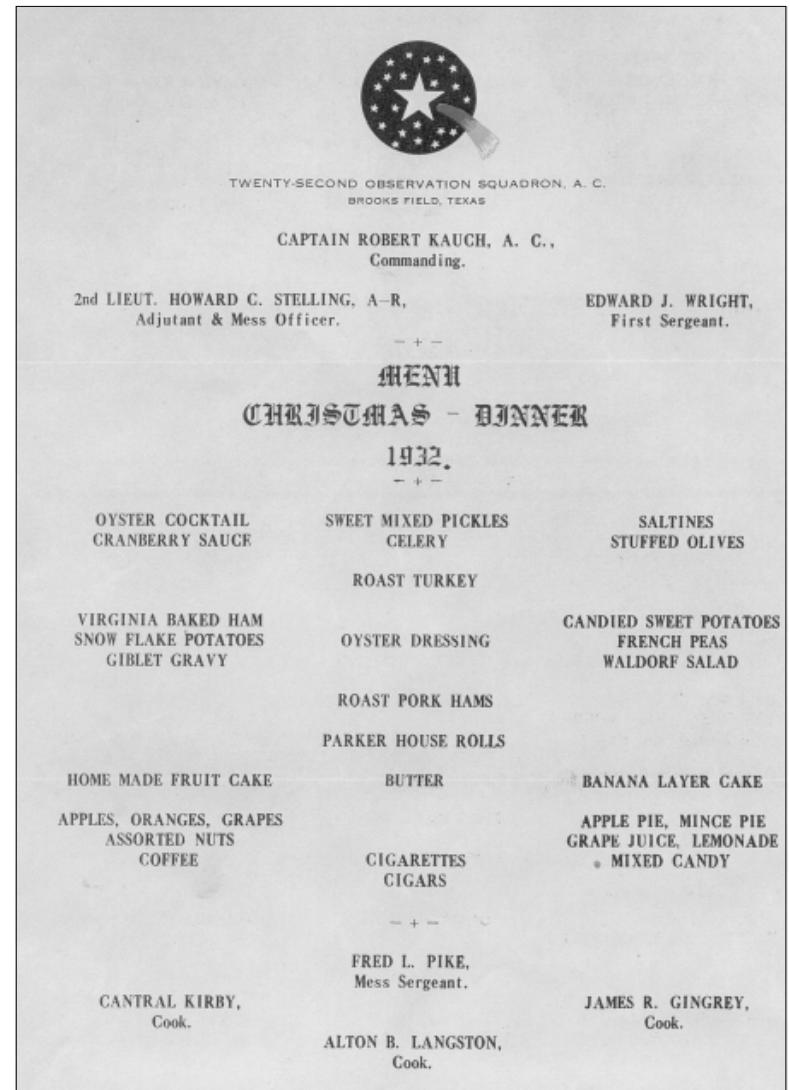
However, the Christmas tradition that has lasted the longest at Brooks is the holiday meal. Today, many organizations boast about having the best Christmas spread at office parties. Folks who claim to have the most sumptuous feasts, however, have no turkey drum stick to stand on when compared to past holiday banquets.

Perhaps one of the most lavish Christmas meals ever produced at Brooks occurred in 1932 when the 22nd Observation Squadron staged its holiday feast at what was then called the chow hall.

Mess Sergeant Fred Pike and his three cooks, Cantral Kirby, Alton Langston and James Gingrey, provided the troops with some exotic foods during a by-gone era when comfort outweighed cost. The bill of fare included such mouth-watering treats as oyster cocktail with cranberry sauce, homemade fruit



Courtesy of Lt. Col. Bruce Baldwin
The Brooks Field Jazz Orchestra played the first holiday concert here in 1918.



Courtesy of Lt. Col. Bruce Baldwin

This 1932 Brooks Field Christmas menu showcases a holiday feast from a by-gone era when mess hall sergeants spared no expense in treating the troops.

cake and Waldorf salad, topped off by the usual after-dinner cigarettes and cigars.

A copy of this menu was donated to the Brooks archives by former Brooks ophthalmology scientist Lt. Col. Bruce Baldwin, who was assigned to the U.S. Air

Force School of Aerospace Medicine. The menu belonged to his grandfather Verdell Cunningham who was stationed here, and no doubt, was so impressed by the holiday meal that he kept the rare artifact until the day he died.



Community servants selected as 2005 Brooks Ambassadors

By Rudy Purificato
311th Human Systems Wing

They both initially pursued community service interests after enlisting in the Air Force. Now, as Brooks City-Base's 2005 Ambassadors, Staff Sgt. Sunny Siler and Master Sgt. Vincent Lapichino will have an opportunity of a lifetime to promote the Air Force and Brooks during a community service extravaganza called Fiesta de San Antonio.

They were introduced to the Brooks community Tuesday at the annual ambassador announcement ceremony at Hangar 9. Brig. Gen. Tom Travis, 311th Human Systems Wing commander, thanked the six candidates who competed and eight others who had applied for their participation in what he characterized as a worthwhile and important community outreach initiative. "This is an outstanding

way for Brooks to continue to be visible in this military city of ours," he said.

"I wasn't involved in community service in high school. I got involved when I joined the Air Force," said Sergeant Siler, a U.S. Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine aerospace physiology journeyman. After enlisting in 1997, this 29-year-old Antlers, Okla. native supported community activities through her church during an initial Air Force assignment at Vance Air Force Base, Enid, Okla.

The third of five children born to U.S. Navy and Vietnam War veteran Jerry Siler and his wife Debbie, Sergeant Siler balanced off-duty community service interests with her job as an undergraduate pilot training instructor at Vance AFB until 2001. While there, she earned a bachelor's degree in aeronautics from Embry Riddle Aeronautical University.

She was reassigned to Brooks in August 2001 as a technical training instructor for the aerospace physiology career field, the first senior airman to be selected for this special duty. In March 2002, she was named Air Force Physiology Airman of the Year. That same year, Sergeant Siler became involved in international relations when she volunteered as a third country national escort in the Middle Eastern country of Oman while assigned to Masirah Island Air Base.

Her Brooks activities include serving as a school mentor and homeless shelter volunteer. She is currently working on a graduate level degree in business and education.

"I got involved in community service while a member of my squadron booster club at Incirlik AB, Turkey. I've also been a volunteer firefighter while stationed at Moody AFB, Ga., and was also involved in helping sponsor an orphanage in Italy while assigned to Aviano AB," said Sergeant Lapichino, Operations Directorate NCOIC for the Air Force Institute for Operational Health.

The second of four children born to Donna Bruner-Ruschok and the late Korean War U.S. Coast Guard veteran Vincent Lapichino, Sr., the 43-year-old Buffalo, N.Y. native began his Air Force career in 1983 as a medical administrative specialist.

During subsequent assignments before arriving at Brooks, Sergeant Lapichino received many honors for his professionalism highlighted by his selection as Health Services Management NCO of the Year and NCO of the quarter while assigned to the 347th Medical Group at Moody AFB. In 1998, he earned an associate's degree in health services management from the Community College of the Air Force.

Sergeant Lapichino has already had a positive impact on the Brooks community. As the Combined Federal Campaign co-lead for Brooks, he was instrumental in raising money and community interest by promoting the first dodgeball tournament in base history as a CFC fundraiser.

The 2005 Brooks ambassadors agree that their participation in Fiesta and other events throughout the year will give them numerous opportunities to promote and magnify the image of Brooks City-Base as an important asset supporting Air Force readiness and economic development.

Other candidates who competed, in what the 311th HSW Public Affairs office described



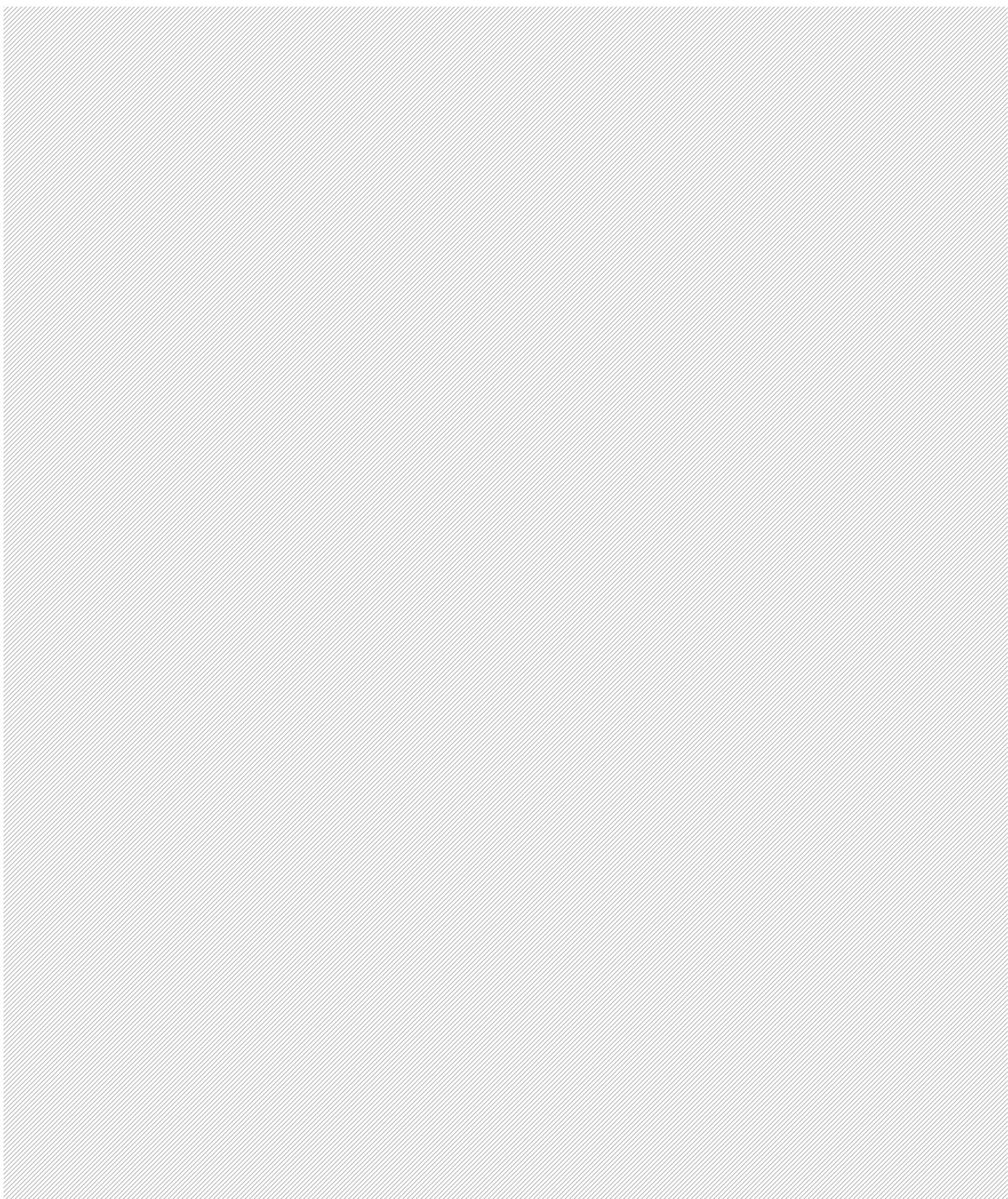
Photo by Staff Sgt. Alfonso Ramirez Jr.
Staff Sgt. Sunny Siler (left) and Master Sgt. Vincent Lapichino were announced as the 2005 Brooks Ambassadors at a Dec. 14 ceremony at Hangar 9.

Fiesta

The Brooks Ambassadors will be especially busy during Fiesta San Antonio, which runs from April 15 through April 24. During those 10 days, the duo will appear at over 50 events,

including the River Parade, the Battle of Flowers Parade and Fiesta Flambeau. For more information about these parades and other Fiesta events, visit www.fiesta-sa.org.

as "one of the closest competitions" since the program began, were: Staff Sgt. Angelina Broner from the Air Force Research Laboratory, Senior Airman Brian Cichowski from the 68th Information Operations Squadron, Ms. Elisa Ruth Nelson from the 311th Human Systems Wing Civilian Personnel Office and 1st Lt. Maurice Edmondson from the 311th HSW's Plans and Programs office.





Brooks joins Marines in collecting toys

By Kendahl Johnson
Discovery editor

This holiday season, the Brooks City-Base community is involved in several different charitable programs designed to provide a more enriched Christmas season for families in need. Along with Brooks Cares, Angel Tree and Elf Louise, Brooks has been working hard to support the Toys for Tots foundation.

Toys for Tots is a Helping Hands life foundation sponsored by the Marines. It's a national campaign that dates back to 1947. In its 56 years, the Marines have distributed more than 313 million toys to 151 million children. This charitable endeavor is one of the nation's leaders in looking after needy children at Christmas.

"We are completely focused on getting donations for toys," said 1st Lt. Heather Heeren, the point of contact for Brooks.

Lieutenant Heeren, who works for the Air Force Institute for Operational Health, has been organizing the Brooks' involvement in the effort. She has a team of volunteer helpers, including contacts in each of the base units.

"The base has been fantastic in its support. We have had a great turnout," said Lieutenant Heeren, adding that nearly 100 volunteers from Brooks have signed up to help with the

program. "All of my unit representatives have been very responsive."

The goal for San Antonio's three Air Force bases, including Randolph and Lackland Air Force Bases, is to raise 10,000 toys. In the first few weeks of the push, the bases have donated 2,500 toys.

Lieutenant Heeren said that the best part of being involved with the toy drive is knowing that scores of children are going to have a better Christmas because of someone else's thoughtfulness and kindness.

"So many people on this base have stepped up and gone above and beyond what I was expecting," she said.

If you wish to donate a toy, boxes have been placed throughout the base. The toys should be new and unwrapped. There is a particular need for infant toys and toys for girls ages 10 through 13.

"The nice thing about Toys for Tots is that there are so many ways to get involved," Lieutenant Heeren said. "You can donate a toy or if you are strapped financially, you can donate your time, which is as important as giving a toy."



Photos by Kendahl Johnson





BRIG GEN. TOM TRAVIS
311th Human Systems
Wing commander

ACTION LINE

536-2222

The COMMANDER'S ACTION LINE is your opportunity to make Brooks a better place to live, work and play.

If you have a suggestion for improvement, a complaint or a problem that you have not been able to resolve through normal complaint channels or the chain of command, call the **COMMANDER'S ACTION LINE, 536-2222**.

Only items of general interest will be published, so please leave your name and number for a personal response.

The base agencies listed below can be contacted directly:

311th Security Forces Squadron.....	536-2851	Military Personnel.....	536-1845
SFS after duty hours.....	536-2851	Civilian Personnel.....	536-3353
311th Civil Engineer Squadron.....	536-3861	Military Pay.....	536-5778
311th Communications Squadron.....	536-6571	Civilian Pay.....	536-8370
311th Mission Support Group – Logistics Division.....	536-3541	Inspector General (FWA).....	536-2358
Safety.....	536-2111	Military Equal Opportunity.....	536-2584
Housing Maintenance.....	533-5900	EEO Complaints.....	536-3702
Housing Office.....	533-5905	BXMarket.....	533-9079
311th Services Division.....	536-2545	Brooks Development Office.....	536-3655
311th Medical Squadron (Clinic).....	536-4715	Brooks City-Base Marketing and Development Office.....	536-5366

Holiday message from AFMC commander

Pride in AFMC's accomplishments sets tone for holiday and new year

By Gen. Greg Martin

Air Force Materiel Center commander

As we celebrate this year's holiday season, I want you, the men and women who carry out Air Force Materiel Command's important mission, to know how proud I am of your accomplishments in 2004. Your professionalism and dedication have helped enable and sustain the world's most capable air and space force — a team that is helping to bring hope and security to parts of the world less fortunate than the United States.

As you make plans for some well deserved time off, please be alert to insidious dangers that can occur during this time of year — winter weather, fewer hours of daylight, over-committ-

ted schedules, alcohol and fatigue. Each and every one of you is a treasured individual — treasured by your family, by your friends and by those you work with. While you're enjoying this holiday season with family and friends let's remember the important concept of being good wingmen to one another so that we will all be able to celebrate the beginning of a new year with the hope and anticipation of even greater opportunities.

I ask each of you to remember that as we celebrate our blessings, there are many who are deployed and serving around the world, many in harm's way. Please keep them and their families in your thoughts and prayers during this very special season. Although they can't be together this year, we all can help them understand that they are a part of a larger family...a family that cares about their needs and happiness.

God bless each of you, and may you and your family have a joyous holiday season.

FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER

SEPERATION AND RETIREMENT

Jan. 5 — 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., Bldg. 537

This is a mandatory class for active military personnel who are retiring or separating within 120 days. Topics covered are pre-separation, Veterans benefits, survivors benefit plans, TRICARE, and financial planning for transition. Spouses are encouraged to attend.

FINANCIAL FITNESS

Jan. 12 — 11 a.m. - 1 p.m., Bldg. 537

Topics include looking at long term and short term financial goals, preparing for impending changes and creating a debt reduction plan. Attendees will receive a free "Loose Change" calendar.

SINGLE PARENTS GROUP

Third Tuesday — 11 a.m. - 1 p.m., Bldg. 537

For a great morale booster, stop by the FSC for a free lunch. Meet other single parents for open discussions or outings. The Chapel, Life Skills Support Center and the Family Support Center are sponsoring this class. Contact LaWanda Roper at 536-2444 or Sandra Cervantes at 536-5301 for more information.

VA BENEFITS ASSISTANCE

Wednesdays — 9 a.m. - 1 p.m., Bldg. 537

A VA representative will be at Brooks weekly. Schedule an appointment to receive VA assistance in filling out your claims, screen medical records, or one-on-one consultations. Bring a copy of your medical records.

To register for class,
Call 536-2444

AIR FORCE AID SOCIETY

The Gen. Henry Arnold Education grant program awards \$1,500 grants to dependent sons and daughters of Air Force members and spouses of Air Force members. Use of fund is limited to tuition, books and fees, or other direct educational expenses. This program is tailored for Air Force families with college students (rank does not disqualify you). Application deadline is March 11, 2005. Pick up your application at the Family Support Center or visit the website at www.afas.org to get more information and download an application.



Brooks captain sentenced to eight years, dismissal

By 2nd Lt. John Chattaway
311th HSW/Public Affairs

Captain Mohamed Mohamed, Air Force Medical Support Agency, Brooks City-Base, Texas, was sentenced to eight years confinement and a punitive dismissal from the U.S. Air Force Monday at a General Court-Martial that concluded after seven days of testimony at the Brooks City-Base courtroom.

The sentence came just two days after the jury found him guilty of assaulting his ex-wife and current wife, threatening his ex-wife and her daughter as well as his current wife and her parents, obstructing justice, violating no-contact orders from his previous and current commanders and wrongfully appropriating Air Force property.

Specifically, Captain Mohamed was found guilty of two counts of violating no-contact orders, one count of wrongful appropriation of Air Force property, seven counts of assault consummated by a battery, one count of aggravated assault, six counts of communicating threats and one count of obstructing justice by a panel of seven officers. Capt. Mohamed has been in pre-trial confinement since his apprehension by military authorities on Feb. 9, 2004.

Captain Mohamed was represented by civilian counsel, Mr. Freddie Ruiz and Mr. David Wheeler, and military defense counsel, Capt.

Anthony Ortiz from Goodfellow Air Force Base. The prosecution consisted of Capt. Marvin Tubbs, Circuit Trial Counsel from Randolph AFB; Capt. Ryan Froelich, stationed at Lackland AFB; and Capt. Gabriel Chavez from the wing legal office at Brooks City-Base.

The prosecution presented a detailed timeline of offenses dating back to December of 2000 involving his ex-wife and ended on Feb. 9, 2004 with assaults against his current wife. The prosecution argued to the courtmembers that the evidence established "overwhelming violence, injury, threats and fear."

The defense agreed with the word "overwhelming," however not in the same manner of speaking. Defense counsel, Mr. Ruiz, argued the charges were overwhelming, excessive and embellished. He claimed the overlapping specifications were based on the wives' hysteria and vindictiveness. In closing arguments, he argued that the charges were race based and because "a white woman ended up in the ER, the Muslim must be guilty."

The jury's decision came after they heard from 25 government witnesses, including testimony from medical personnel and photographs documenting the assaults. The defense called one witness in their case. Capt. Mohamed did not testify. The courtmembers began deliberating Friday evening and reached a verdict late Saturday afternoon.

Steroid-like supplement andro banned by President

By Capt. Michael Felsen
311th Human Systems Wing/JA

The government ordered an end to sales of the steroid-like supplement andro, made famous by baseball's Mark McGuire, in the latest crackdown on over-the-counter pills that claim to help people get in better shape.

On Oct. 22, the President signed Senate Bill 2195, otherwise known as the "Andro Ban." The law, which takes effect Jan. 20 following a 90-day grace period, adds 18 substances to the list of banned anabolic steroids in Sec. 102 of the Controlled Substances Act.

The most significant of these is androstenedione, a steroid precursor known as "andro" in the bodybuilding community. Under the new law, andro and andro supplements, which are currently available in virtually all health and fitness stores, will be classified as Schedule III controlled substances, similar to cocaine and heroin.

As of Jan. 20, these substances may no longer be legally purchased. It will also be illegal to use them, even if they were bought before Jan. 20.

By passing this bill, the government declared that the products that many people have been

purchasing legally for years through local health food stores or online retailers are now labeled as "Schedule III" controlled substances. In other words, possession of these products could possibly lead to military punishments, civilian arrest and discharge.

Listed below are all the Andro Supplements that are scheduled to be banned per the Senate bill which has been signed into law by President George Bush.

androstenediol	norandrostenediol
androstenedione	norandrostenedione
androstenediol	methyl dienolone
androstenedione	methyl trienolone
bolasterone	norboletone
calusterone	norclostebol
furazabol	normethandrolone
mestanolone	stenbolone
tetrahydrogestrinone	
4-hydroxytestosterone	
4-hydroxy-19-nortestosterone	
1-dihydrotestosterone (1-Test)	
13b-ethyl-17a-hydroxy-4-en-3-one	
17a-methyl-4-hydroxynandrolone	
17a-methyl-3b,17b-dihydroxy-5a-androstane	
17a-methyl-3a,17b-dihydroxy-5a-androstane	
17a-methyl-3b,17b-dihydroxyandrostan-4-ene	
17a-methyl-1-dihydrotestosterone	



A LOOK at BROOKS

What is your favorite holiday movie?



Staff Sgt. Amanda Sutton
311th HSW/MEO

Planes, Trains and Automobiles — It's the humor that reduces the holiday stress. It's one of those 'anything that can go wrong, goes wrong' movies.



A1C Khia Dupree
311th MSG

Home Alone II — I love that little boy. He's so cute!



Zucydadt "Zee" Garcia
Travel Management Office

Miracle on 34th Street — It's just always been my favorite movie, and plus it's set in the same place I'm from -- New York City.



Col. James Henderson
USAFSAM

It's a Wonderful Life — It shows what is important about the holiday season; family and friends. It also shows we all deserve a second chance.



2nd Lt. Andrew Cantwell
AF Research Laboratory

National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation — It's my family's favorite movie to watch over the Christmas holiday and it's really funny.



Things to do around Brooks

SERVICES DIVISION
by Jan McMahon

YOUTH PROGRAM CENTER
536-2515, Bldg. 470

Gift wrapping help

Santa Claus will send his helpers to make your holiday gift wrapping painless. Bring your gifts to the Youth Center through Dec. 22 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and let someone else do your gift wrapping for you. There is no fee and donations will be accepted. Paper and ribbon will be provided free of charge.

If you have a box for your gift, please bring it with the item to be wrapped. This will help the workers with wrapping your gifts. All donations will go towards the youth and teen center programs.

Base caroling

The base community is invited to go caroling through base housing with the center staff tonight. Carolers will meet at the Youth Center at 5:30 p.m. Join in and help entertain base housing residents with the sounds of holiday songs. All participants will return to the center following the caroling and visit with Santa Claus. Hot chocolate and other refreshments will be served at that time.

Winter Day Camp

The Youth Center will host a winter camp Dec. 20 through Jan. 3, 2005. The camp is for youth ages five to 12 and will last from 6:45 a.m. to 5 p.m. Breakfast, lunch and snacks will be provided for camp attendees. Several field

trips are being scheduled for the Winter Day Camp.

OUTDOOR RECREATION 536-2881, Bldg. 1154

Outdoor recreation has a large recreational vehicle/auto storage lot with 176 slots, asphalt top, double storage that is capable of storing up to a 45-foot RV. Your antique cruiser, ski boat, or even Pops old truck can be stored. Just stop in and fill out a contract. The fee is \$15 per vehicle per month. You can pay for up to one year in advance.

PREMIERE DESIGNS 536-2120, Bldg. 705

Premiere Designs can create a keepsake to remember those special occasions. They will inscribe a name, logo or phrase on a wine glass, glass mug or picture frame glass. They also have several gift items and stocking stuffers. Hours of operation are Monday through Thursday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

HOLIDAY DECORATING CONTEST

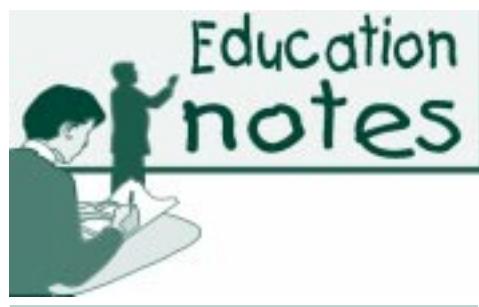
Be sure to drive around base and check out the greeting cards displayed in front of organizations. The displays will be judged Dec. 17 on theme and originality.



BASE CHAPEL 536-3824

Christmas Services :
Friday, Dec. 24 —
4:30 p.m. — Catholic Christmas Mass
7 p.m. Protestant Christmas candle-light service

Regular Sunday Services:
9 a.m. — Catholic Mass
10:30 a.m. — Interdenominational worship, includes children's church
9 a.m. — Protestant Sunday School
10:30 a.m. — Catholic Religious Education



Applying for tuition assistance

Air Force members at Brooks City-Base preparing to register for college courses and request Air Force tuition assistance are encouraged to apply on-line using the Air Force Virtual Education Center. Air Force members will no longer need to access the Brooks home page to apply for tuition assistance, but can accomplish this request directly through AFVEC.

AFVEC is the Air Force's premier site for providing information about educational information and benefits. The purpose of this site is to provide students one-stop-shopping for all higher education needs. In addition to the on-line TA request, AFVEC offers a wide array of on-line services to empower the student to actively participate in all aspects of their education. These services are offered to encourage progress of each educational endeavor the student chooses to participate in; whether it is requesting tuition assistance, working towards their Community College of the Air Force degree or applying for commissioning.

Individuals may access AFVEC directly through the web site at <https://afvec.langley.af.mil> or through a link on the Air Force portal. Members will be required to logon to "My AFVEC" by entering their email address and password. New users will be required to create an account. Once in "My AFVEC," members should click "Request

TA" to begin the process of requesting tuition assistance.

Members will be required to know and enter basic course registration information in the on-line TA request. They must know, among other things, the school's exact term start and end dates, course code, course title and cost per semester or quarter hour. Once the member has entered and reviewed the TA request information, the request will be forwarded electronically to the education center for final review and approval. The member will be notified via email and through AFVEC when the request is approved.

St. Mary's University

St. Mary's University has a graduate school representative at the Education Office every Wednesday from noon to 2 p.m. St. Mary's offers 24 graduate programs, including business administration, computer information systems, industrial and clinical psychology, engineering systems and international relations.

St. Mary's also offers post-baccalaureate initial teacher certification for Texas. For qualified individuals, St. Mary's graduate school offers a partial tuition grant. Additional information can be obtained by scheduling an appointment with the St. Mary's representative through the Brooks Education Office.

Spouses to Teachers Program

The Department of Defense tasked DANTES to develop and manage a new pilot program to help spouses begin careers as teachers. The Spouses to Teachers Program has just been launched in six states with a large military population and a need for public school teachers.

These states are California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Texas and Virginia. Based on interest and activity, additional states may be added in the future. All eligible spouses

who wish to become teachers in the pilot states may receive assistance from the Spouses to Teachers Program. This includes spouses who have already earned a baccalaureate degree or higher, as well as spouses who are at the undergraduate level. Degreed spouses will be counseled on their options for achieving certification and information on potential funding sources and employment opportunities.

Non-degree holders will receive help in identifying degree completion programs, as well as information about possible financial assistance, both state and federal, and the potential for finding employment as teacher's aides or other positions in public schools. To take advantage of this pilot program in Texas, spouses may contact the Texas pilot office toll free at 1-800-815-5484.

Upper Iowa on base and online

Register now for Upper Iowa University - Distance Learning. Courses are available in business and public administration. Online and correspondence courses are also available in other majors. The Upper Iowa University office in the Brooks Education Center is open Monday through Friday. The coordinator also holds advising hours at Lackland on Thursdays. For more information, visit the website at www.uiu.edu, stop by the Brooks office, Bldg. 558, or call 536-4033.

Montgomery GI Bill participants can increase benefits

Active duty personnel, currently enrolled in the Montgomery GI Bill, have the opportunity to increase Chapter 30 GI Bill benefits by \$5,400 — from \$23,400 to \$28,800 — for a maximum contribution of \$600. This payment increases the full-time monthly rate one dollar for every four dollars contributed. The minimum payment is \$20 per month. Contributions can be started and stopped at any

time while the participant is on active duty. This is not a pay reduction; therefore, there is not a tax savings. This benefit is only open to personnel who first entered active duty on or after July 1, 1985 and elected to participate in the MGIB. For more information, call 536-3618.

Air Force Virtual Education Center

The Virtual Education Center is now online. Servicemembers can view information about Air Force Education Centers and CCAF. CCAF students can order CCAF transcripts from this site. There are also practice tests available for CLEP exams on this site. To access the AFVEC go to afvec.langley.af.mil and establish an account. For more information call 536-3617.

Discover Program online

The Discover Program is a career exploration program for individuals searching for a new career. This program can be used by military, civilians and family members. For more information or to schedule an appointment to review the website and get started, call 536-3617.

Texas State University

Texas State University offers a Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences. The BAAS degree provides an excellent opportunity for individuals to capitalize on prior work and training experiences. Students pursuing this degree may transfer semester hours previously earned, individualize

the degree plan with major emphasis in an occupational field of choice, and earn semester hour credit for work and life experience and training conducted by business, industry, and military. Night classes are available in the San Antonio and San Marcos area. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call 536-3618.



Brooks cares about helping families

By 1st Lt. Jason Bishop
311th HSW/Public Affairs

Most people would consider getting their holiday shopping done for their immediate family and friends quite an accomplishment. However, for the first sergeants at Brooks City-Base, they aren't satisfied until the entire Brooks community is taken care of.

Brooks Cares, a program which has been going strong for more than 20 years, is one of the programs that helps accomplish just that.

"It's about the Brooks community helping each other," said Senior Master Sgt. Mary Scott, chief of the command support staff at the Air Force Medical Service Agency and this year's project officer for Brooks Cares.

The time from Thanksgiving to the week before Christmas is the busy season for the first shirts. It's during this time that toys and non-perishable food items come pouring into the Brooks Cares

boxes placed throughout the organizations on base. The items are then packaged up and distributed to Brooks-area families over the holiday season.

The families who receive gift packages from Brooks Cares are chosen by the first sergeants, said Sergeant Scott, who is in her fourth year of participation in Brooks Cares but first year as the program's organizer.

"We get nominations from all the shirts," she said. "We know the folks in our organizations who are having financial trouble."

All of the families nominated receive a package, Sergeant Scott said. Brooks Cares doesn't just take care of the military families, but civilian families are included as well. "We turn no one away," she said.

"If they are assigned (to Brooks), we'll help them out," said Senior Master Sgt. Bertell Francois, first sergeant for the United States Air Force School for Aerospace Medicine.

The donations for Brooks Cares come

almost exclusively from the people living and working on Brooks.

"We don't go outside the Brooks community," said Sergeant Scott. "We don't need to."

A big part of the success of this year's Brooks Cares program is that it incorporated Angel Tree, for the first time, said Sergeant Francois, who is participating in his seventh year of Brooks Cares. Angel Tree is the Family Support-sponsored program (see related story on page 17).

"This will guarantee that most of the kids are going to have a really good Christmas," he said.



Photo by 1st Lt. Jason Bishop

Master Sgt. Ron Pena (left), Master Sgt. Cindy Riley and Senior Master Sgt. Bertell Francois work at sorting food donations for the Brooks Cares program. The trio are working with the first sergeants to make sure that all families have a happy holidays.

Last year, through Brooks Cares, the first sergeants of Brooks City-Base distributed packages of donated items to 27 families.



Brooks 'elves' spread Christmas cheer

By Kendahl Johnson
Discovery editor

As the year winds down, the hustle and bustle of preparing for the holidays kicks into full gear. With the stresses and demands of the holiday season, it might be easy to forget that it is the season to be jolly. One way to relieve some stress is to get lost in volunteer service to others.

There are many charitable organizations to get involved with, including one of San Antonio origin – Elf Louise. The project began in 1969 when its founder, Louise Locker, was a student at Trinity University in San Antonio. She found that for many San Antonio families, Christmas just did not exist. Louise began to look for a way to provide a few Christmas presents to some of these children. That first year, with the help of a friend, she collected gifts for children in 13 families.

From those humble beginnings 35 years ago, Elf Louise has blossomed into one of the largest charitable events in San Antonio. Since its inception, the non-profit effort has processed and delivered over two million toys to needy families. What makes the operation even more impressive is the fact that it is operated 100 percent by volunteers.

This year, Master Sgt. Robert Eshelman involved several base groups for a single-day excursion to the Elf Louise operation. Over 50 people from Brooks joined other volunteers for wrapping, checking, hauling, loading and other various activities.

"Historically it's a Top 3 initiative where a certain amount of Top 3 individuals would sign up and we'd get about 10 to 15 people," Sergeant Eshelman said, adding that since taking over as the point of contact, he has tried to involve groups other than just the Top 3, including the Airman's Council and the NCO Council.

"We are trying to invite as many people as we can," he

said. "We hope to extend it to Randolph and Lackland (Air Force Bases) and reserve an entire day for military to volunteer and show San Antonio what we are doing and how we are supporting the kids."

Elf Louise is an intricate and impressive operation. In full force, the effort needs about 50,000 square feet of warehouse space to operate. The space is donated, making finding space a yearly battle. This year, the project moved its headquarters from the north side to the old Montgomery Ward's at the Crossroads Mall.

A team of 25 core volunteers work year round to ensure its success. In December, the project is in full motion, with hundreds of daily volunteers working to sort and wrap presents then organize them numerically according to postal routes. Throughout the process, over 5,000 volunteers will have helped in some capacity.

When it's all said and done, the team will have used over 30 miles of wrapping paper to wrap over 54,000 toys. When the wrapping and sorting are complete, more than 650 Santa Claus teams will deliver the gifts to 9,000 families targeted by 80 different social service agencies. "It's a great example of teamwork in action," Sergeant Eshelman said.

"I call it organized chaos," said Brooks employee Sharon Early, who is one of Elf Louise's serious supporters. "It's a project where if you consider as a whole, you are amazed how it ever gets done. But it does somehow and it's amazing."

Ms. Early, who works for the 311th Human Systems Wing Contracting Directorate, has been volunteering for 20 years and works year round with the project. She is a self-proclaimed "Elf Louise addict," who initially volunteered for the project to help overcome homesickness. The enthusiasm she sees from the volunteers and the joy brought to the families is what keeps her coming back every year.



Master Sgt. Robert Eshelman from the 311th Human Systems Group and Sharon Early from the 311th Human Systems Wing check the Santa Claus outfits. More than 650 Santa Claus teams will be delivering toys from Dec. 15 to Dec. 23 to 9,000 San Antonio families.

For other Brooks volunteers, getting out and helping with the Elf Louise project has been a gratifying part of the holiday season. First-time volunteer Staff Sgt. Angie Broner from the Air Force Research Laboratory called her experience "very rewarding."

"It means a lot that I was helping the children of the community to have a (better) Christmas," Sergeant Broner said. "I will do it again because it gives me an opportunity to help out the less fortunate."

Staff Sgt. Katrice Shields of the 311th Human Systems Program Office volunteered because she thought it would be a great way to get involved with the community and to help the children.

"Christmas is a very important holiday for (everyone) but unfortunately not all families are capable of providing gifts for their children," Sergeant Shields said. "This was a great way to help out and be a part of making a child smile at Christmas."

Staff Sgt. Hope Kennedy, of the U.S. Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine, volunteered because of her own childhood Christmas memories. "I remember the excitement of opening pre-



Photos by Kendahl Johnson

Staff Sgts. Kaprice Shields, Hope Kennedy and Angie Broner are seen wrapping toys as part of the Elf Louise project. They were just a few of the volunteers from Brooks that worked towards making it a better Christmas for families in San Antonio.

sents when I was a child and I wanted to help in anyway that I could to pass the experience on to other children," she said. "Elf Louise is a great cause and helps so many families and children."

Elf Louise is just one of several initiatives designed to provide toys for families in need. Brooks employees also support Operation Blue Santa, Brooks Cares, Angel Tree and Toys for

Tots. The different projects are not set up to compete against each other, but to complement each other and provide people several different opportunities to make a charitable contribution.

"I don't care what people get involved with," Sergeant Eshelman said. "It's just nice to see people get involved with something at Christmas time. It benefits the children."



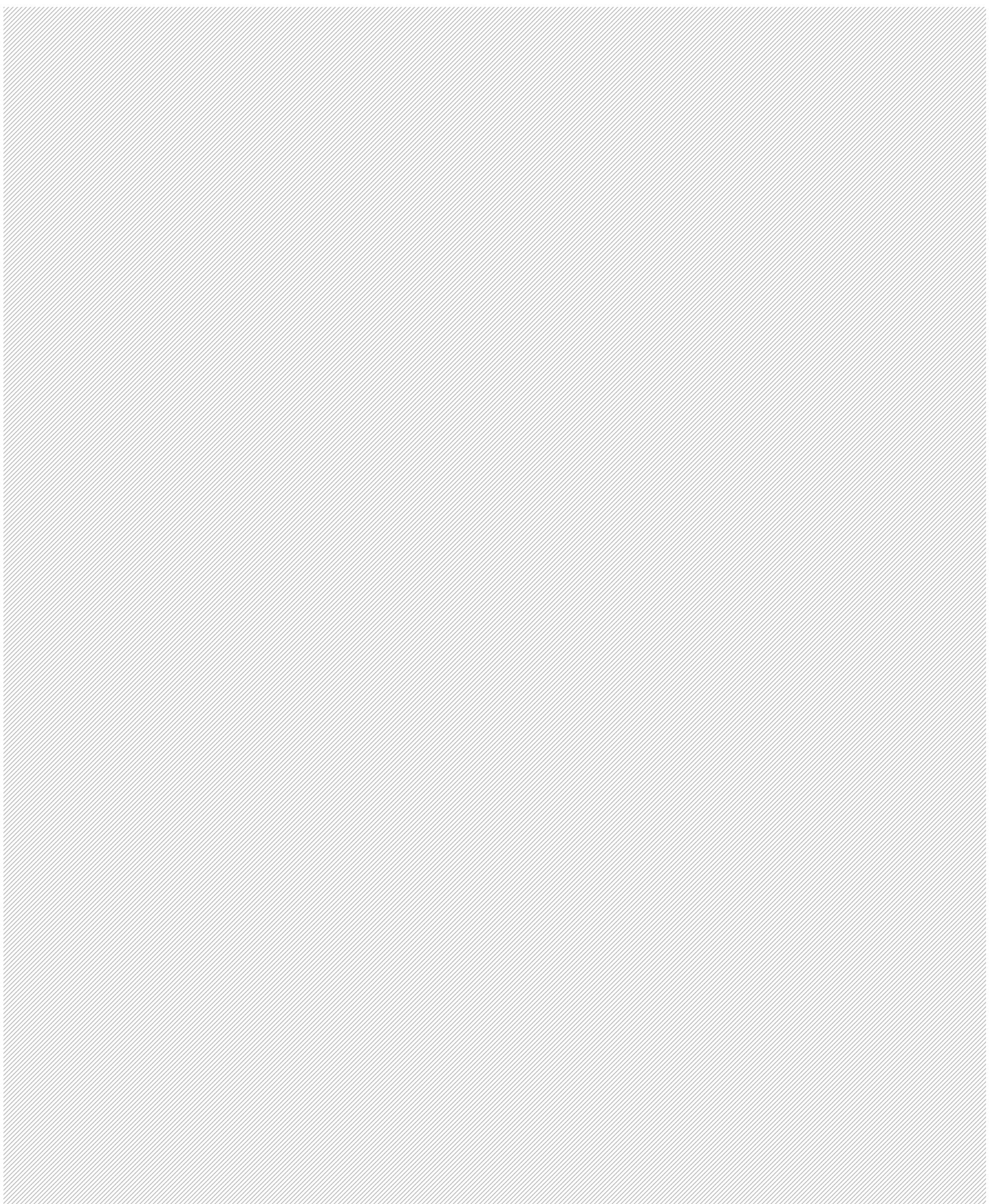
Staff Sgts. John Howell (left) and Tim Kronk, both of USAFSAM, and Master Sgt. James Crites of the 311th Human Systems Program Office worked at organizing hundreds of wrapped presents according to postal routes.



Brooks librarian Joanna Hansen (left) and staff members Bea Elizalde and Becky Estrada helped raise more than 100 bears for the Child Protective Services office. Members from all over the base community donated the stuffed animals as part of a campaign called "Be Eager About Reading," or BEAR for short. The bears were delivered Thursday.



DISCOVERY 13
Dec. 17, 2004





Safety awareness for holiday season

By David Lemme
311th HSW/Safety Office

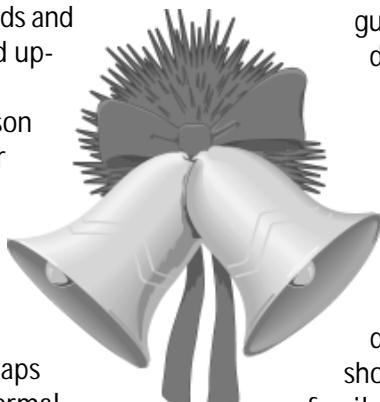
The winter holiday season is already upon us even though we are still mowing grass and barbecuing outdoors here in south central Texas. The holidays are a great time to give thanks, appreciate family and friends and to reflect on the past and upcoming New Year.

As joyous as the season is, we must remember that mishaps and injuries do not "Stand Down" during the holidays. In fact, our chances increase to become involved in mishaps due to changes in our normal day to day activities and our personal spontaneity when having a good time. The basic mishap factors haven't changed and are well known; excessive vehicle speed, alcohol, not using seat belts, the hours of darkness and fatigue all contribute in some way to off duty motor vehicle mishaps.

We have plenty of mishap experience which validates the "lack of good judgment" in many of the other categories of mishaps such as recreation, sports, home repair, yard work and shopping.

The following three areas of concern should always be given serious consideration during this holiday season:

Holiday Travel — Many of us will "hit the road" as we travel to be with family and friends in other locations. Plan your trip carefully and allow plenty



of time to get to your destination. Do not drink and drive and always be aware of "the other driver". Keep an eye on constantly changing weather and road conditions.

Hosting a Party — If hosting a party, be a good host and if alcohol is served, be aware the consumption by your guests. If some of your guests do over-indulge, ensure designated drivers are available or provide accommodations for them to "sleep over."

Decorating — When decorating, ensure all decorations are fire retardant or resistant. Lights should be UL approved. Keep fragile decorations and tinsel away from small children and pets. If using a real tree, water it frequently to keep it from drying out and becoming a major fire hazard. Be very careful with the use of candles and never use a flame candle on or near any combustible material.

If we all exercise good personal risk management throughout the holiday season, we can lessen the potential for the needless loss of someone in our Brook City-Base family. Take the time to assess risks, consider consequences and take appropriate action to prevent mishaps or injury. We wish each and every one of you a safe and enjoyable holiday season.

**HAVE A SAFE
AND HAPPY
HOLIDAY**

Planning saves lives during holiday travel

How Fast Is Too Fast — The maximum daytime speed limit on interstate and state highways in Texas is 70 miles per hour – unless otherwise posted. At night, the maximum speed limit is 65 miles per hour – again unless otherwise posted. Observing speed limits means more than driving faster or slower than the posted speed. It means driving to conditions. When it's raining or foggy, when ice is on the road, when traffic is heavy or when road construction is ahead, adjust your speed accordingly.

Sharing the Road With Trucks — Know a trucker's "blind spots." The "blind spots" or "no zones" around a truck are the areas where cars are invisible to the truck's driver. If you can't see the driver's face in his/her side-view mirror, the driver can't see you.

Avoid tailgating as truck drivers cannot see cars directly behind them. Also, truck and bus drivers making wide right turns can't see cars squeezing in on their right. To pass trucks safely, wait until you can see both truck headlights in your rearview mirror.

Right Is Right — Watch for signs on Texas multi-lane highways that read "Left Lane For Passing Only." These signs let you know that the left lane on a divided highway is not a fast lane. It is a passing lane. Impeding the flow of traffic by continuing to drive in the left lane is a Class C misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of up to \$200.

Cell Phones and Driving — People who use wireless phones while driving have a 34 percent higher risk of a collision than those who do not talk and drive.

Even using a hands-free phone can be dangerous, because talking on the phone diverts your attention from driving. Long, complex conversations make you four times more likely to have a car crash. Pull safely off the road if you need to make a call.

Wake Up and See The Road — Texas highways have more than 100 rest stops where motorists can take regular safety breaks. In addition, drowsy drivers can take these precautions: Avoid driving during late night and early morning hours, set realistic travel goals, eat healthy meals and avoid alcohol and other drugs, switch drivers every two hours even if you don't feel tired and stop every few hours to stretch.

Holiday CONTROL

Did you know last year, Air Force members experienced over 5,000 alcohol-related incidents. Most incidents happened around the holiday season. This holiday season the Alcohol Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment Office would like you to use CONTROL. What does CONTROL mean?

Caution: stay within your limit
Observe surroundings; don't leave your drinks unattended

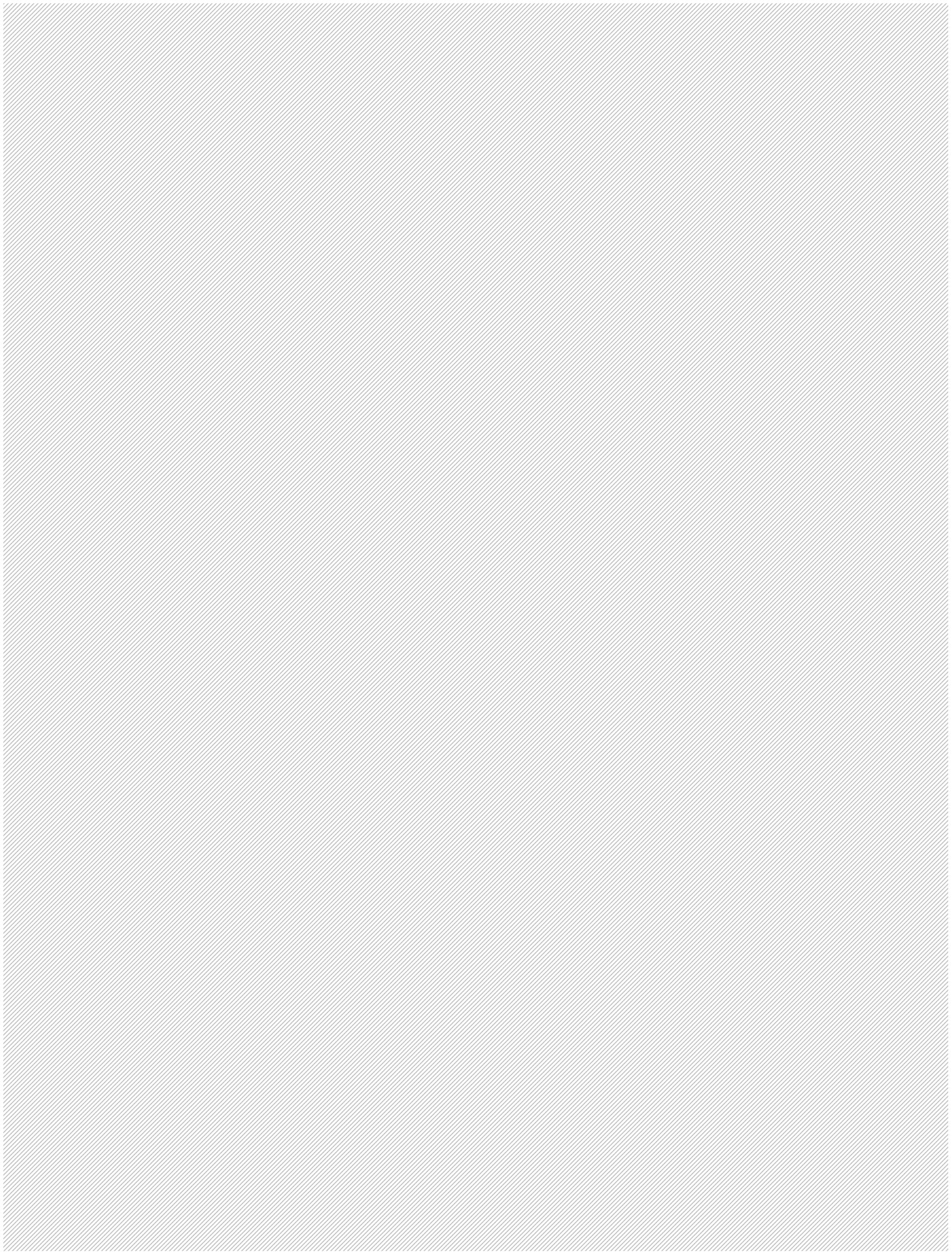
Never ride with someone who has been drinking
Time your drinks; one drink per hour is safe

Resist the temptation to over do it
Obey the laws
Listen and Look to each other; address holiday concerns with your people
CONTROL yourself this season. We want you back next year.

— By Tech. Sgt. Hazel Wong, 311th MDS



DISCOVERY
Dec. 17, 2004 15





FEATURE



A song for the season



NOEL

Q&A

FULL NAME/RANK:
Leona Noel

DUTY TITLE,
ORGANIZATION:
Medical technician with Choctaw Archiving, Air Force Institute for Operational Health

IN SIMPLE TERMS,
WHAT DO YOU DO?:
I run laboratory tests on serum specimens sent to us from the Armed Forces and all over the world

BIRTHDAY:
July 19, sometime in the 40s, but I stopped having them sometime in the 80s!

HOMETOWN:
Portland, Maine

FAMILY STATUS:
Two sons and two daughters, and one granddaughter and three grandsons

PERSONAL MOTTO:
"If you always do what you've always done, you will always be what you've always been."

PET PEEVE:
Arrogant and ill-mannered people

INSPIRATIONS:
My grandmother and my mother

HOBBIES:
Number one, I love to read. I will read anything, especially biographies. I also bowl, golf and travel.

ULTIMATE GOAL:
I have achieved most of the goals I set for myself a long time ago.

IF I WON THE LOTTERY:
I would make it possible for my grandchildren to go to the college of their choice.

MY GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT:
Yet to happen – I still have time.

MY MOST PRIZED POSSESSION:
My brain. I hope it never fails me.

By Steve VanWert
Discovery staff writer

Leona Noel, contractor with Choctaw Archiving and working at the Air Force Institute for Operational Health at Brooks, wasn't always a "Noel." She was born in Portland, Maine, and named "Leona McDonald."

"I got so tired of other kids singing 'Old McDonald Had a Farm,'" she said. "I always hoped my married name wouldn't have a song attached to it." Well, that didn't exactly happen. "At least they only sing 'The First Noel' one month out of the year," she said.

Ms. Noel graduated from Portland High School as a member of a 300-student graduating class. She was the oldest of five children and didn't have much time for extra-curricular activities. She worked after school in the local drug store, helping her single-mother with the bills.

"I was one of those old-fashioned soda jerks," she said. "It was fun, making milk shakes and malts for people. Back in those days, the drug store had a lunch counter and that's where I was, scooping out ice cream and selling sodas." It's a job pretty much delegated to "the good old days," with one exception. "I hear that there's an old-timey drugstore in Uvalde," she said. "I've got to go out there some day and see it."

After graduation, she enlisted in the U.S. Army and went to Fort McClellan, Ala., for basic training. From there she had her first experience with Texas while attending the 911 MOS, or medical corpsman technical school at Fort Sam Houston.

"I was in the old Women's Army Corps, or WAC," she said. "We had separate dorms and kept pretty separated from the male soldiers."

After graduating from the one-year basic course, Ms. Noel was assigned to the Brooke Army Medical Center at Fort Sam as a lab tech. She stayed four years before moving on to Fort Devens, Maine for two and a half years.

While at Fort Sam, she went to the NCO Club one evening and met a nice young soldier. Three months later, they



Photo by Staff Sgt.
Alfonso Ramirez Jr.

were married. She was officially a "Noel." And a palindrome, as well. L-E-O-N-A-N-O-E-L spells "Leona Noel" backwards and forwards.

After completing her tour of duty with the Army, they moved to Clarkston, Mich., where she worked as a lab tech at area hospitals. She stayed in the area for the next 30 years or so.

Of that 30, she spent 18 years working for Quest Diagnostic, ending up in sales. The money was good and she enjoyed her job. However, two of her daughters were living in San Antonio and keep telling her "come on down."

In July 2002, she did just that.

But things didn't start out as happily as she hoped.

"When I first moved down here," she said, "I thought I was going to be able to transfer, but due to reasons I couldn't control, the transfer didn't happen. I showed up without a job."

For a couple of years, she worked in various jobs, as a pharmacy tech for WalMart, CareMart and others. Then she saw an ad in the newspaper, applied, was hired and began working at Brooks City-Base in July this year.

"Working at Brooks is different," she said. "I was in the Army, remember? It's not a 'post,' but a 'base' and the stripes are all upside down, but I've learned to live with it."

Better than that, she really likes it here. She tests samples for blood serum,

thyroid serum, tumor markers and does hormone testing, as well as the Prostate-Specific Antigen test, or as she calls it, "the big test."

"The people here are so laid back and easy going," she said, "especially compared to civilian labs. They're just wonderful."

During her off duty time, Ms. Noel can be found bowling, reading or playing golf. She especially loves reading biographies, having recently completed the life stories of Sam Walton, Lee Iaccoca and Donald Trump. She reads three books at once; one in the living room, one in her bedroom and one at work.

She enjoys golf, but gets to play only occasionally. "It's a great way to get out in the fresh air and get some exercise," she said. She usually plays only nine holes at a time, and walks the course. "When I retire, I'd like to find a condo on a nine-hole, par-three course," she said, "so I can just go out my back door, tee it up and play until I get back home."

It was her bowling that got her started in golf in the first place. "The girls on my winter bowling team played golf in the spring and summer," she said. "They invited me to play, and I've loved it ever since."

When not reading or chasing the little round ball around the golf links, Ms. Noel can be found listening to country music, but not just any country music. "I love classic country," she said. "I love Wayland and Willie and Hank. Those songs told stories. It was the golden age of country music."

Future plans include convincing her other daughter to move to San Antonio. "She'll love the warm weather just as I do," Ms. Noel said.

But doesn't the Texas heat and humidity make it difficult to get into the Christmas spirit, even for a "Noel?"

"A little bit," she said. "But it's so wonderful being able to go shopping without worrying about bad weather and having to bundle up to keep warm. Down here the living is easy, and I like it easy. As long as they'll have me, I'm a Texan!"





By Rudy Purificato

311th Human Systems Wing

It's always a blue Christmas for children who are delighted rather than disappointed this time of year, thanks to Operation Blue Santa. The operation has set up 'shop' for the first time at Brooks City-Base.

Housed in the old Brooks fire station, Blue Santa headquarters is bursting with activity as law enforcement volunteers sift through piles of donated toys and food in preparation for the organization's holiday deliveries.

Since 1976, the San Antonio Police Department Association has supported this holiday community outreach. Last year, 4,000 San Antonio families were recipients of Blue Santa's good cheer.

"Our first deliveries will be Dec. 22. They will be made all

over the city, including to Brooks families," said John Esquivel, one of three Blue Santa coordinators for the San Antonio Police Department.

Officer Esquivel said the Brooks Development Authority granted SAPDA's request to stage operations here because the Alamodome, home for Blue Santa headquarters the past few years, was unavailable due to a scheduling problem.

Brooks became the new temporary home for Operation Blue Santa on Nov. 29. Since then, tons of non-perishable food and a mountain of toys have been warehoused at the fire station.

"So far, we've filled 17,000 bags. Fifteen to 20 officers per day volunteer to help fill the (gift) bags," said Officer Esquivel, a 20-plus year SAPD veteran and an Air Force reservist.

Blue Santa supports families who have applied through their police sub-station. "Elf Louise and us share the same computer data base (for family gift requests)," Officer Esquivel said.

The central data base improves gift-giving efficiency, distribution and fairness, preventing families that apply from receiv-

ing donations from multiple sources, he says

Most important to Blue Santa volunteers is correctly fulfilling family requests. "Every bag is marked with the gender and ages of the children," Officer Esquivel says. Gift bags are customized based on need.

"We provide toys from toddlers up to 15 years old," he said. The Blue Santa inventory includes radios, books, toy race cars and board games for older boys and makeup kits and plastic jewelry for young ladies.

Canned goods, such as dry milk, pink salmon and mixed fruit, are also provided in gift bags only when the family requests it, Officer Esquivel said. SAPDA purchases this food from the San Antonio Food Bank, while toys are bought through local distributors. Corporate, church and individual donations help fund the program. "Some of



Photos by Rudy Purificato

A truckload of donated toys is unloaded by members of the San Antonio Police Department at Blue Santa's headquarters.



Members of the San Antonio Police Department bag donated toys at the Brooks City-Base old fire houses, site of this year's Blue Santa headquarters.

our biggest contributors include St. Matthew's Catholic Church and Eagle Valley home builders," Officer Esquivel said.

Annually, tens of thousands of dollars are donated to Operation Blue Santa. A few years ago at Brooks, fitness center participants in an annual powerlifting event contributed to Blue Santa.



Photos by Rudy Purificato
Tech Sgt. Brigida Hendrix, family readiness NCO at the Brooks Family Support Center, places a gift at a Brooks Angel Tree, one of three trees on base.

By Rudy Purificato

311th Human Systems Wing

The holiday spirit of giving seems to be especially pervasive this year within the Brooks community. It has manifested itself in a variety of meaningful and impressionable ways for children and families in need.

From toy and food requests to special needs youngsters wanting Santa's helpers to visit them, Brooks volunteers have

'Angel Tree' meets Yuletide requests

responded with generosity and more than tidings of good cheer.

"I'm excited. I think people are in a very giving mood," said Lucy Belles, Brooks Family Support Center director. It was Belles who helped channel some of this holiday magic that will soon make youngsters' Christmas wishes come true. She helped forge Brooks Cares support for the base Angel Tree project.

Toys aplenty now crowd Angel Tree sites in Building 150, Sidney's and the Family Support Center. The 33 Brooks children, whose names and gift requests adorn Angel Tree tags, will receive the presents they've asked for.

Support for Brooks Angel Trees has been overwhelming, Belles says, explaining that gift donations have exceeded expectations. Among the donated presents that came as a bit of a surprise to Angel Tree project planners are 17 teddy bears and two brand new bicycles. She says there's more than enough toys for Brooks families that have made requests, with a lot more to spare. Call the surplus Santa's 'Christmas bonus.'

This good cheer has spread beyond the main gate at Old Corpus Christi Highway and past Southeast Military Drive straight to Charles C. Ball Elementary School. It is there where nine special education students were treated Thursday to a holiday delivery of gifts from the overgrown

'elves' of the 311th Communications Squadron.

"For me, it was tough (emotionally) to see them. It takes a very special person to work with these children," said Senior Master Sgt. Jerry Gibson, referring to the students in Nancy Barrientos's class who suffer from a variety of conditions ranging from cerebral palsy to autism. Last year, this Life Strides teacher established a holiday relationship between her students and the 311th Communications Squadron.

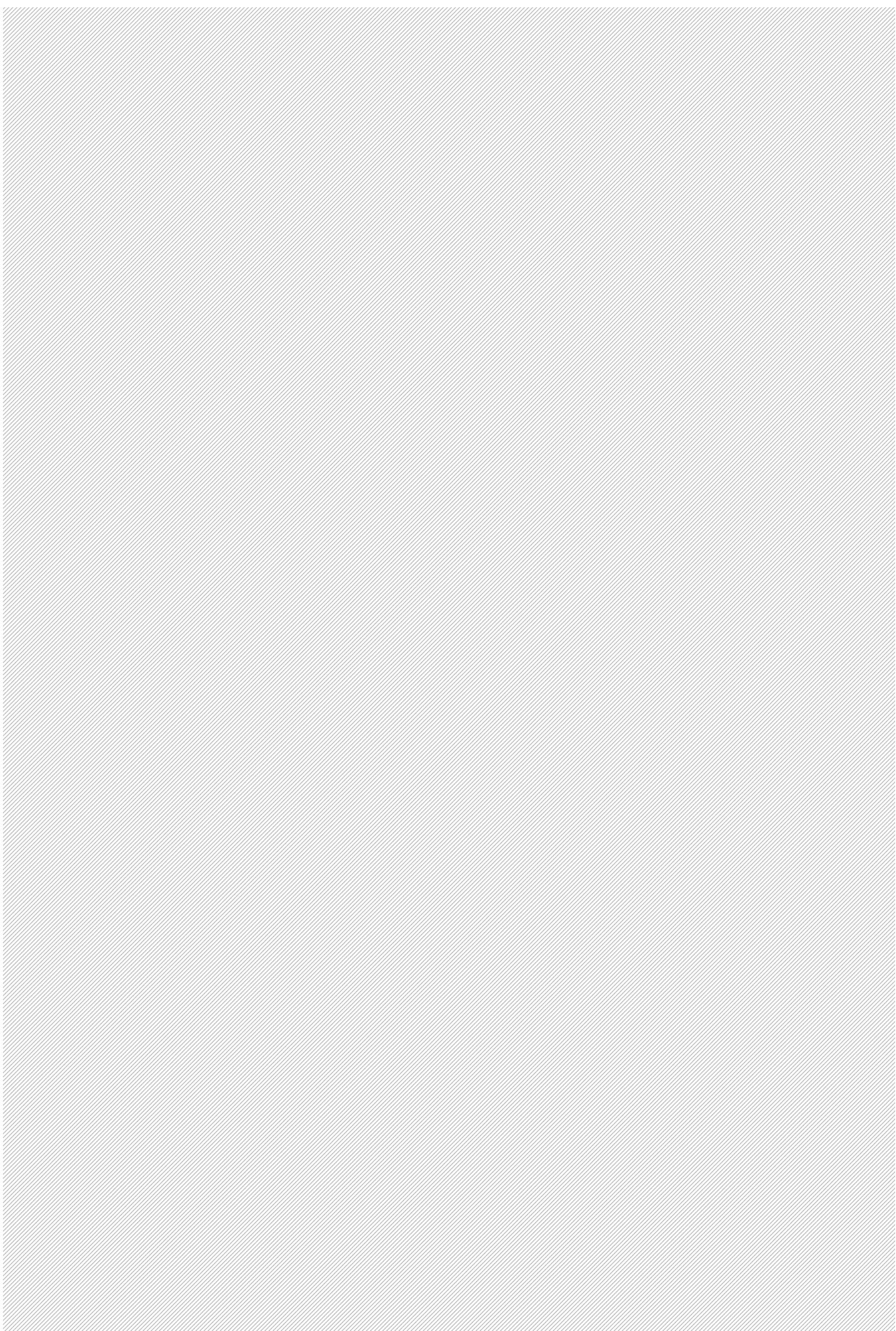
"She sent a letter to Senior Master Sgt. Donna Williams requesting that we sponsor a child," Sergeant Gibson said while explaining the impetus for the former 311th Communications Squadron superintendent beginning a holiday tradition of support to this San Antonio Independent School District campus.

The initial letter asked that Brooks supporters pick a child from her class and buy them a toy. The heartfelt request resulted in



A Brooks Angel Tree at the Family Support Center features children's requests for specific toys. Every need was fulfilled this year, thanks to the generosity of the Brooks community.

The concerted effort that the Brooks community has made to bring joy and comfort during this Yuletide season has helped reduce the number of people experiencing the 'holiday blues.' It has also limited the chances of a 'Grinch' showing up a Brooks family's doorstep, highly unlikely given the fact that it fears too much good cheer.





2004 Sports in review: A year of many 'firsts'

By Rudy Purificato

311th Human Systems Wing

The Brooks sports landscape was dramatically altered in 2004 with the introduction of several new events that planners hope will become annual traditions.

Leading the top of the popularity list of new athletic activities that the Brooks fitness center sponsored was the first team triathlon in base history held in September. The 68th Information Operations Squadron won the modified team triathlon, while also winning the base's first dodgeball tournament that was staged as a Combined Federal Campaign fundraiser.

Also staged here for the first time by the fitness center was a girl's fast-pitch softball tournament in July that featured several teams from the San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department league.



YA's John Pierce won all six of his matches to win first-place in the San Antonio Men's Match Play Golf Tournament on April 18.

The United Kingdom's All-Royal Air Force basketball team played at Brooks for the first time, part of an inaugural San Antonio tour in February that helped the squad prepare for European competition. They defeated the Brooks men's varsity hoop squad in one of the most exciting overtime games ever played here.

The Brooks men's and women's varsity softball teams elevated their level of play by competing for the first time in the United States Sports Specialty Association Military World Championship tournament in August in Garland, Texas. The men's squad went 0-2 in the double-elimination event, while the women's team finished with a 1-2 record.

Two Air Force officers became the first rugby players in Brooks history to help the Air Force Rugby Team win an Armed Forces championship. Capt. Andy McQuade from the Air Force Research Laboratory and 1st Lt. Matt Klugston from the Air Force Medical Support Agency also had the distinction of playing for the championship squad that swept the competition as an undefeated tournament club.

Another first was 311th Human Systems Program Office's John Pierce who won the 2nd Annual San Antonio Men's Match Play Golf Tournament in April.

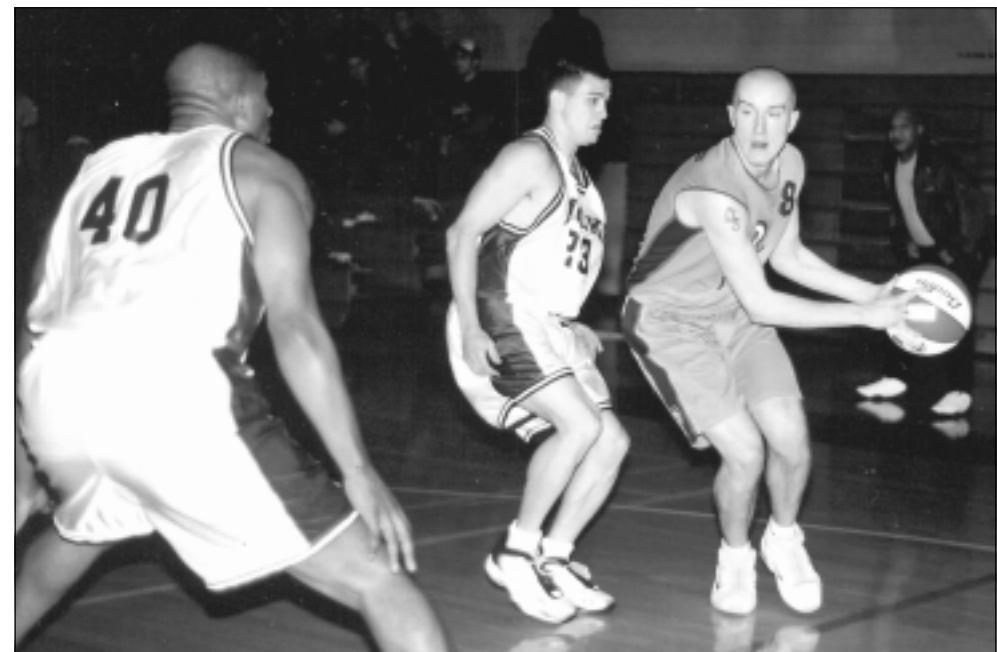
The sports year also produced some predictable outcomes with the combined AFIOH/AFRL intramural softball team winning its eighth straight base championship, the 311th Mission Support Group's Services golf team repeating as intramural league champs and AFIOH earning bragging rights for the second year in a row by defending its Sports Day title.

The base also bid farewell to some long-

time sports friends and athletes with the retirement of Lt. Col. Cranston Artis, Brooks Sports Advisory Council chairman and Brooks Golf Course superintendent Edwin "Bubba" Bretzke. Brooks also said goodbye to all-star athlete Trish Esquivel who PCS'ed after having revived the women's varsity softball program after a four-year hiatus.



Photos by Rudy Purificato
Capt. Andy McQuade (left), an Air Force Research Laboratory scientist, and 1st. Lt. Matt Klugston, an Air Force Medical Support Agency mechanical engineer, were teammates on the 2004 Air Force rugby team. The team won the Armed Forces championships in October.



The United Kingdom's All-Royal Air Force basketball team played at Brooks for the first time, part of an inaugural San Antonio tour in February that helped the squad prepare for European competition. The British team won the game in overtime.



SPORTS

Brooks men's hoop team rebounding despite setbacks

By Rudy Purificato

311th Human Systems Wing

Within the space of a week, they dealt a devastating blow to an undefeated team and then experienced a disappointing defeat from that same ball club. Despite what appears to be a rollercoaster season filled with thrills and spills, the Brooks men's varsity basketball team seems to possess one key ingredient that championship-caliber clubs consistently demonstrate: resilience.

The Brooks squad turned a corner in its rebuilding efforts Dec. 4 during a weekend home opening series against their Southwest Military Basketball League rival and tormentors – Randolph Air Force Base. After dropping the first game to the Ramblers 70-62, Brooks shocked their long-time nemesis with a 98-89 overtime win the next day. "Brooks hadn't beaten us in three years. We were 17-0. They got us in every area, especially turnovers. He's (Brooks coach Damion Byrd) doing a great job," said Terrance Dunkley, Randolph AFB head varsity basketball coach in his ninth season.

Dunkley admits that the stunning loss to Brooks was a wake up call to his team not to be complacent and overconfident going into the 28th Annual Joe Hall Basketball Tournament held Dec. 10-12 at Lackland AFB. "My team is playing angry. It's payback time," said Dunkley during halftime of the tournament's opening round between Randolph and Brooks. The Ramblers were determined not to be uncharacteristically forced into the opening round loser's bracket, for they had a reputation to maintain as perennial contenders. Randolph had previously won this tourney in 1999, 2001 and 2002 and

were runners up last year to the Air Force Academy.

It has been said that revenge is better served cold, yet Randolph was much too hot for Brooks as it expanded its 43-27 halftime lead to an eventual 91-59 blowout. Randolph won the tournament, avenging last year's championship game loss by defeating the Air Force Academy in the title contest.

"After the game got out of reach, I told the guys to stay positive and work on something good each time down the floor. I told them to keep fighting," said the Brooks coach whose pep talked paid off during the team's next matchup.

Brooks defeated Sheppard AFB in a 60-59 nailbiter. "We continued to hustle, although we were shorthanded. I describe it as a gutsy, ugly win," Byrd said.

Due to work commitments, three of the team's key players could not participate in the tournament after the opening round.

Brooks was eventually bounced from the double-elimination tournament, losing 91-55 to the Air Force Academy, the heavily-favored defending champs that had lost its opening round game to Lackland.

"A few things really hurt us," Byrd said, admitting, "We had no time to practice because of work and TDYs. We're a team that can't go without work for too long," he said.

The Joe Hall tournament was yet an-



Photo by Rudy Purificato

Slim Bailey, a member of the men's varsity team, fires a shot against Randolph Air Force Base in the opening round of the 28th annual Joe Hall tournament Dec. 11 at Lackland AFB.

other learning experience for a squad that has already exceeded expectations and is a great improvement over last year's club in terms of performance.

"We're 6-13 for the season. Last year's team won only one game," said Byrd who was a player on that squad. "We're very optimistic on where we're heading. We're still growing as a team and I'm growing as a coach. We're making progress together." Adhering to their current motto "keep making progress," the Brooks team is working toward a March goal of becoming a contender in the league championship tournament.

Planning your holiday bowl viewing schedule

This year, there are 28 football games on the bowl schedule. Since watching football competes with so many other holiday activities, it's nearly impossible to watch all of them. So viewers must choose a handful of games on the schedule.

In an effort to help our readers make the difficult decisions, we offer a few of what we think are the best matchups on the schedule. There are a lot of great games on the schedule, but we've narrowed it down to six "must see" games:

Insight Bowl (Dec. 28) — It's always fun to have a team to cheer against and for many, it's the Fighting Irish. Go Ducks!

Alamo Bowl (Dec. 29) — A couple of decent teams are coming to town. You should probably try to get off the couch and go to the Alamodome and watch this one in person.

Emerald Bowl (Dec. 30) — Since the Falcons didn't make it to a bowl this year, we need to support our sister military service, the Navy Midshipmen. They face off against Mountain West opponent New Mexico.

Liberty Bowl (Dec. 31) — If you like fireworks, skip all other New Year's Eve broadcasts and watch this game. Both teams sport high-powered offenses and porous defenses. Expect over 100 points to be scored in this one.

Rose Bowl (Jan. 1) — Watching the Rose Bowl is an annual tradition. Plus, there is a bit of drama attached to this one as our neighbors to the north will need a good performance to prove that they were justified in getting a BCS bowl bid. Also make sure to catch the pre-game parade.

Orange Bowl (Jan. 4) — If any game on this list was an automatic, it was this one. Not only is it for the national championship, it's the last game of the season.

— Kendahl Johnson, Discovery Editor

2004-05 BOWL SCHEDULE

DATE	BOWL	MATCHUP
Tue., Dec. 14	New Orleans	Southern Miss 31, No. Texas 10
Tue., Dec. 21	Champs Sports	Georgia Tech vs. Syracuse
Wed., Dec. 22	GMAC	Memphis vs. Bowling Green
Thu., Dec. 23	Fort Worth	Cincinnati vs. Marshall
Thu., Dec. 23	Las Vegas	Wyoming vs. UCLA
Fri., Dec. 24	Hawaii	UAB vs. Hawaii
Mon., Dec. 27	MPC Computers	Fresno State vs. Virginia
Mon., Dec. 27	Motor City	Toledo vs. Connecticut
Tue., Dec. 28	Independence	Miami Ohio vs. Iowa State
Tue., Dec. 28	Insight	Oregon State vs. Notre Dame
Wed., Dec. 29	Houston	Colorado vs. Texas-El Paso
Wed., Dec. 29	Alamo	Oklahoma State vs. Ohio State
Thu., Dec. 30	Continental Tire	No. Carolina vs. Boston College
Thu., Dec. 30	Emerald Bowl	New Mexico vs. Navy
Thu., Dec. 30	Holiday	California vs. Texas Tech
Thu., Dec. 30	Silicon Valley	Troy vs. Northern Illinois
Fri., Dec. 31	Music City	Minnesota vs. Alabama
Fri., Dec. 31	Sun	Arizona State vs. Purdue
Fri., Dec. 31	Liberty	Boise State vs. Louisville
Fri., Dec. 31	Peach	Florida vs. Miami
Sat., Jan. 1	Outback	Wisconsin vs. Georgia
Sat., Jan. 1	Cotton	Tennessee vs. Texas A&M
Sat., Jan. 1	Gator	Florida State vs. West Virginia
Sat., Jan. 1	Capital One	Iowa vs. LSU
Sat., Jan. 1	Rose	Michigan vs. Texas
Sat., Jan. 1	Fiesta	Pittsburgh vs. Utah
Mon., Jan. 3	Sugar	Auburn vs. Virginia Tech
Tue., Jan. 4	Orange	USC vs. Oklahoma

68th IOS plans to 'double team' intramural hoop league rivals

By Rudy Purificato

311th Human Systems Wing

The 68th Information Operations Squadron has put a new spin on an old basketball concept by 'double teaming' Brooks intramural hoop league rivals with two teams they have fielded for the 2004-05 season that began Dec. 9.

Coached by Reggie Smith, squads 'A' and 'B' are loaded with players who are determined to capture the intramural base crown that had slipped through their fingers last season. The former 2003 intramural league champs lost both ends of a base championship title doubleheader in March to their perennial nemesis: the combined Air Force Institute for Operational Health/Air Force Research Laboratory squad.

What they'll face this season is a defending base championship team that has a new head coach who is just as wily and basketball savvy as the squad's predecessor.

While AFIOH/AFRL's longtime coach Aaron Sinclair will miss most of the season due to an extended TDY, his replacement is Ric Peterson whose basketball pedigree includes having won more championships than Michael Jordan. Peterson, an AFRL scientist who also coaches offense for the Brooks men's varsity hoop squad, is the son of a legendary Montana Sports Hall of Fame basketball coach. As a player last season, he helped AFIOH/AFRL defeat favored 68th IOS in the playoffs.

Other league competitors include the 311th Human Systems Program Office, U.S. Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine and 311th Mission Support Group, the latter coached by Hosea Talbert who is also head coach of the Brooks women's varsity basketball team.

Regular season games are played at the fitness center gym every Tuesday and Thursday at 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. through Feb. 10. A double-elimination post-season tournament will be played for the base championship. The league champ earns the number one seed for the playoffs.

For more information about participating contact the fitness center at 536-2188.

Photo by Rudy Purificato



The intramural basketball season began Dec. 9, with games being played Tuesdays and Thursdays through Feb. 10.



Brooks' powerlifting meet draws defending world champion

By Rudy Purificato

311th Human Systems Wing

While no members of the Brooks community, other than officials, participated in the 11th December Fest Powerlifting and Bench Press Meet on Dec. 11, powerlifting's defending seven-time world champion and a fledgling high school girls' team added prestige and power to the event.

Reigning world champion Johnny "Truck" Graham and the Ganado High School powerlifting team were among participants in this USA Powerlifting-sanctioned meet hosted by the Brooks Fitness Center.

"We had a good turnout with 33 competing. We also added a

new youth division, (ages) 10-11 and 11-12," said Willie Mastin, event organizer and fitness center specialist who, along with retired Brooks powerlifter Dennis Abernathy, served as official USA Powerlifting judges.

Graham, a retired Army non-commissioned officer, conducted a mandatory safety briefing here as Vice President and Master National Champion for USA Powerlifting. The 52-year-old Killeen, Texas resident made Brooks one of his last North American stops on a four-continent tour.

"I've been to various meets since October, including Africa, Asia and Europe," said Graham who recently won his seventh

consecutive world powerlifting title in the masters category, 242-pound weight class. Born Aug. 10, 1952 in Daytona Beach, Fla., Graham is also the current world record-holder in two of powerlifting's three events. "I set the world record in the deadlift in 1999 with 727 pounds and the world record in the squat in 2003 with 755 pounds," he recalled. Both records were established at the national championships hosted by USA Powerlifting, the national governing body for the sport in the U.S.

Graham said powerlifting's popularity has grown in the U.S. during the past seven years because many athletes from other sports have migrated to it to fulfill strength training requirements. "We've had a lot more young lifters competing," he said. Most of the younger powerlifters who participate in USA Powerlifting sanctioned meets, Graham explained, are trying to qualify for championship tournaments. "They (usually) only need one or two sanctioned meets to qualify," he said, noting that the goal for many youth teams is to compete in the 2005 championships featuring the High School and Teenage/Junior Nationals in Killeen, Texas in June and the World Championships in Fort Wayne, Ind. in September.

"Lifters from the high school nationals are selected for the

men's team finishing second to Japan," noted Graham

As for the Ganado High School team, composed of 10 girls and two boys, they participated in the Brooks meet for the first time with the goal of qualifying for a championship tournament. "We (already) qualified six. We want to qualify five more (here), said Ganado High School athletic director Mark Byrd who is also the team's head coach.

Only in its second year, the Ganado team won the South Texas high school championship this year.



Seven-time defending world powerlifting champion Johnny Graham conducts a safety briefing for competitors in the Brooks Fitness Center's powerlifting and bench press meet.



Photos by Rudy Purificato

A member of the Ganado High School girl's powerlifting team readies herself during the bench press event of the Brooks Fitness Center's 11th December Fest Meet.